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# EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

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Remarks:

State Dept. review completed.

Executive Secretary

Date

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**DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

Washington, D.C. 20520

Executive Registry

82-3552

**MEMORANDUM FOR MR. WILLIAM P. CLARK  
THE WHITE HOUSE**

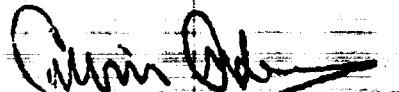
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**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

**COL. JOHN STANFORD  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

**Subject: Talking Points for Press Background on Iran/Iraq War**

The importance of holding to an agreed line with the press was stressed in the CCPG meeting yesterday. The attached Talking Points and Q's & A's have been approved by the Acting Secretary for use by Department officials in backgrounding journalists.

  
**L. Paul Bremer, III  
Executive Secretary**

**Attachments:**

1. Talking points for press backgrounder on Iran-Iraq
2. Questions and Answers for press backgrounder on Iran-Iraq

State Dept. review completed.

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DRAFT TALKING POINTS FOR PRESS BACKGROUNDER  
ON IRAN-IRAQ WAR

Introduction

- o The Iran-Iraq War has taken a new turn, with potentially serious consequences. I want to brief you on the unfolding situation, its implications for the US and our moderate friends in the region, and the steps we are taking and may take in the days ahead.
- o There has been a lull in the war since the recapture of Khorramshar. Iraq unilaterally declared a cease-fire at the beginning of June, allegedly so that it could offer support in the fight against Israel.
- o Iraq claimed that it then pulled out of all Iranian territory, which it did for the most part. The Iranian regime rejected the cease-fire and stated three demands for an end to the war:
  - (1) that all Iraqi troops pull back from Iranian territory
  - (2) that Iraq be internationally condemned as the aggressor and pay massive war reparations
  - (3) that the current Baghdad government of Saddam Hussein be deposed
- o Despite the intermediary counsel of several states, Iran would not forgo the use or threat of force in order to oust Saddam Hussein.

Current Situation

- o Over the course of the last two weeks there has been a growing concentration of Iranian artillery and armor on the Iraqi border near the major Gulf city of Basra.

- o Iran has now opened a major offensive in the Basra area.
- o Over 100,000 Iranian troops and 100,000 Iraqi troops are involved in the fighting.
- o The initial Iranian military objectives are not clear but could include inflicting heavy damages on the Iraqi Army and perhaps the capture of Basra.
- o Attainment of these objectives could put great pressure on the regime of Saddam Hussein.
- o Tehran has disclaimed any territorial intentions, but it has called for the establishment of a new Baghdad regime acceptable to the government in Iran.

#### Implications for US Interests

- o The Iranian invasion will pose new dangers for US interests in the Middle East.
- o The region is of great strategic importance. The US has a long standing interest in the territorial integrity of each state in the region.
- o Since the revolution Iran's relations with its neighboring states have been troubled. Any escalation of the war, particularly an Iranian move into Iraq, must increase the concerns of those states.

### The US Policy

- o We will continue to maintain a policy of neutrality between Iraq and Iran.
- o We believe a political solution to the war must be sought which is based on respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of both states.
- o The US will encourage and support any reasonable efforts to bring about a cessation of hostilities and a negotiated end to the conflict. We will continue to work in the UNSC to get a ceasefire resolution acceptable to both sides.
- o Throughout the war we have been in close consultation with the friendly states in the Gulf region. Our support for the security of those states which might feel threatened by the conflict is well known. We will consult with them on appropriate future steps.
- o We have developed military supply relationships already which help these states provide for their own security. The most significant indication of our support is the deployment of AWACS aircraft in Saudi Arabia early in the conflict.
- o We also maintain a carrier task force in the Arabian Sea and COMDEAST FORCE naval units in the Gulf.

Questions and Answers on Iran-Iraq

1. Will the US now offer support to Iraq to prevent an Iranian victory?

The US will maintain its policy of strict neutrality in the war.

We are continuing our efforts in the UN and through third parties to seek a peaceful end to the war.

2. Is the US looking the other way at arms transfers by Israel to Iran/ by Egypt to Iraq?

We have not approved, in any way, the transfer of US origin equipment to either side of the war.

3. Will the US support Egypt/Jordan in sending troops to the war?

We have not received any request from any country to assist in the movement of its forces or the use of US arms in the war. If we do, we will consider the request in light of our own national security interests, what will enhance regional stability and security, and what is in keeping with US law.

4. Is the US planning to send forces to the area because of the potential spread of the war?

The US maintains some forces in the area, (MIDEASTFOR ships in the Gulf, carriers in the Arabian Sea, AWACS IN Saudi Arabia). The level of this presence rises and falls periodically, and has been adjusted in the past as circumstances require. We do not, at this time, foresee any possibility of US ground forces being deployed in the area.

5. If a state in the area, say Saudi Arabia, asked for US troops as a show of force at this time, would we agree?

The US has deployed forces in the region in the past at the request of regional governments and could do so again, if requested by a friendly government. Any deployments would, of course, be defensive in nature and would be in keeping with US law.

6. Would US forces in the area fire on Iranian aircraft or ships attacking friendly states such as Saudi Arabia?

Unless US forces were directly attacked or threatened with attack, they would not engage in operations without the President's approval.

7. If US forces deploy to the area for exercises, will they be unarmed as they were when President Carter deployed F-15s in 1978?

US forces engaged in exercises do often use live weapons. Any US force would be capable of defending itself. But the specifics of an exercise would vary from case to case.

8. Do you expect Iran to attack Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, or other states in the area?

Iran knows what universal condemnation would result from such an act. Nonetheless a lashing out at the Gulf states in some way cannot be ruled out. We know that Iran has been supporting subversion of Bahrain and has recently threatened it to de-stabilize Saudi Arabia in certain circumstances.

9. Does the US want to see the Saddam regime maintained in power in Baghdad?

As a general matter of policy the US does not interfere in the internal affairs of others. By the same token, we do not approve of the imposition of regimes on one country by another.

10. Wouldn't any new government in Baghdad be less favorable to the US and pose a threat to Jordan and Saudi Arabia?

It is not clear that if Saddam Hussein were replaced, he would be followed by a government that had substantially different foreign policy orientations from the current government. One of many possibilities is that Iran could attempt political subversion of Iraq toward the end of establishing a government similar to that in Tehran.

11. Where is the Soviet Union in this war?

The Soviet Union claims neutrality. They have greatly reduced their arms flow to Iraq. There are indications that the Soviet Union is backing Iran indirectly. Soviet arms are arriving in Iran -- presumably through intermediaries such as North Korea, Libya and Syria.

regime

The Soviets not appear to be supporting the Saddam as they once did, in part because Saddam has tried to follow an increasingly non-aligned course and has tried to acquire arms from France and others, and in part because they see an opportunity to move into a closer relationship with Iran.